United Nations A/61/701

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 January 2007

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Agenda item 67 (c)
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Letter dated 5 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the question of the death penalty delivered by Finland, on behalf of the 85 signatories to the statement, under agenda item 67 (c) on 19 December 2006 at the 81st plenary meeting of the General Assembly during the consideration of the report of the Third Committee (A/61/443/Add.3) (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Kirsti **Lintonen**
Permanent Representative of Finland
to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 5 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Tuvalu, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

The right of everyone to life was universally affirmed in article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in other international instruments, such as in article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and articles 6 and 37 (a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the last decade, the Commission on Human Rights adopted at all sessions a resolution on the question of the death penalty, expressing deep concern at the continuing use of the death penalty around the world and calling upon States that still maintain the death penalty to abolish it completely and, in the meantime, to establish a moratorium on executions.

We firmly believe that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. The death penalty provides no added value in terms of deterrence. Any miscarriage or failure of justice is irreversible when, in a cruel and inhumane way, the punishment deprives someone of his or her right to life. The signatories of this statement are pleased to note that the trend towards the worldwide abolition of the death penalty continues and welcome the abolition of capital punishment in three States over the last year, together with positive developments towards its complete abolition in many other countries.

However, despite these developments, there is still cause for great alarm. The signatories of this statement remain deeply concerned about the resort to death penalty all over the world.

The signatories of this statement commit themselves to working towards the abolition of the death penalty and, where the death penalty still exists, call for its use to be progressively restricted, insist that it be carried out according to minimum standards (see Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50) and, in the meantime, call for the establishment of a moratorium on executions.

The signatories call upon the General Assembly to be seized of this matter in the future.